Title: **CHAIRMAN HOLDS HEARING TO DISCUSS POST-SADDAM IRAQ**
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DODD:
Could you touch on this comment just quickly on the Iranian religious? To an extent, is that report accurate? Are there communications, contacts, some relationship developing between the Iraqi exiled community and the religious conservatives of Iran?
FEITH:
There are.
DODD:
Yes.
FEITH:
You know, Iran is right next door. And Iran has a large number of Iraqi refugees in it. And those refugees are connected with Iraqi refugees and exiles in other countries. So those kinds of contacts exist.
DODD:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BIDEN:
Are we going to secure the borders? Are we going to secure the borders of Iraq? Is that a mission?
GROSSMAN:
Yes.
BIDEN:
OK. Is that going to require troops and -- on the Iranian border? Or is it going to require -- I mean, what is the mission? What are you anticipating?
FEITH:
Senator, the -- it's hard to answer a lot of these "what ifs" because a lot depends on, you know, future events that we don't know. As Secretary Rumsfeld likes to say -- it's that he doesn't know whether the -- if there is a war it's going to be four days, four months -- four weeks, four months. A lot depends on, if there is a war, what the nature of the war is -- how much destruction there is -- how much cooperation one gets -- how many Iraqi units defect. There are enormous uncertainties. And the most you can do in planning is develop concepts on how you would proceed, not rigid plans based on some, you know, inflexible assumptions about how future events are going to unfold. That's our problem. And you know that as well as we do. What we -- so what we have done is we have been thinking this through as precisely as we can, in light of the uncertainties.

FEITH:
And I don't think I want to venture into the prediction business. The question that you ask about keeping Iraq together is a serious question. You're correct that Iraq is a country that was manufactured, as it were, by the victorious allies after World War I. It didn't

exist as a country before that. But there are many countries around the world that didn't exist before World War I and that have developed a sense of national identity and unity. It is our policy that we favor preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq. And we think that that's important for the stability of the region. And there are many countries in the area that have a strong interest in that, and we share that interest.

BIDEN:
The road to peace rests in getting rid of this guy. Let me tell you, the Iranians make him look like an amateur. The Syrians make him look like a bumbler. What trouble he has caused with Israel in the Middle East is infinitesimal in my view compared - and he does cause trouble - is infinitesimal compared to the trouble that the Iranians, the Syrians and others in the region have caused. So is the prescription meaning once we do that now we've got to do Syria and Iran? I just think that we're not ready right now. We're not ready right now.

ZINNI:
We mobilized troops and brought them to Kuwait under Vigilant Warrior and a set of other exercises. And we have bombed after the UNSCOM inspectors were forced to leave. And at that time, what concerned me was that if we had to execute our war plan, I was confident in the first parts of it, the military parts. I did not have the same degree of confidence in the phases following, the post conflict environment. I had personally served in Somalia three tours. I was in northern Iraq with the Kurds. I was in the former Soviet Union when we tried to do some reconstruction work there. And I did the planning in Bosnia when I was on the European Command staff. And I knew what could be involved in everything from basic humanitarian operations to full reconstruction or nation building.
I worried about another scenario that was not addressed in any of the war plans. And it was the implosion of Iraq, not the explosion. We always assumed that the war would kick off by Saddam invading or reinvading Kuwait or doing something unacceptable that caused our response. But we saw, and our friends in the region saw fissures and cracks, admittedly small at the time, but could lead to a collapse. And I thought that a collapsed state of Iraq would present the same problems as a post conflict state of Iraq. And I asked the interagency to come together to work a plan. I was interested in what we were going to do. And frankly, there were reasons for this, not only to identify the problems of what had to be done, but I didn't want the military to be stuck with this problem as is always the case. We did that. I must say with mixed results. I can't say I had enthusiastic support from all agencies, but I did from some. And it helped us identify some of the problems.

The Combatant Commander doesn't go home. The idea that there's an exit strategy or we leave is naïve. You stay. The Gulf War may have ended in 1991, but CENTCOM for 12 years after was in Iraq. Flew it over. No fly zones. No drive zones. Maritime intercept operations. Occasional bombings. An average presence of 23,000 troops from all services. The war never ended. We aren't going to go home from whatever we do in Iraq. There's things in this part of the world that are too important

for us to think that this is a go in, do the job as best we can and pull out.

When asked by Senator Bill Nelson (FL) about the possibility of Iranian mischief via the Iraqi Shia, General Zinni offers this calculation:

Iran gets a twofer here. One, they get rid of Iraq as a major threat by us getting in there. And they can deal with us by insuring that we have a lot of trouble and problems that discredits us in the region if they can generate that in there. So they deal with Iraq, and they deal with us if they can generate those kinds of problems.

The worst image, my worst nightmare would be on Al Jazeera TV the picture of American troops in combat fighting Iraqis the same time the IDF is in the West Bank and in Gaza in incursions as a reaction to some sore of suicide bombing or worse. And the images show Israelis and Americans killing Arabs. That, if I were an Iranian or an Al Qaida or Hamas or jihad, I would be wanting to generate that at the moment that we go in. And the affect in the region can be disastrous.

Senator, I don't believe he's [Saddam Hussein] an imminent threat to us. I think he is a threat. He threatens to destabilize the region left unchecked - but he is very well checked - he could develop the kinds of threats that could directly affect us. My problem is no in dealing with him militarily. My problem is in timing. Everything we're talking about here, use of the military, the cost and the resources, the potential destabilization of the region, distraction from other priorities, this is in my view the worst time to take this on. And I don't feel it needs to be done now. I do feel he needs to be dealt with, though.

NELSON:
And if the Iranians really wanted to give us fits, that's what they'd do is stir up those groups such as Hezbollah so that the Americans would have it on two fronts.

ZINNI:
Well, the Iranian hard liners are in trouble internally. They're seeing their own internal revolution come about. They need to do something to stop that momentum and to distract it. Nothing better than a common enemy. And to mobilize that what Tony Cordesman, the natural feelings in terms of the Arab Israeli and U.S. involvement. And this is the chance for them to regain the initiative of the revolution. What Tony said was a very important point and would cause me to disagree with what Secretary Feith said today. By changing the government in Iraq, you don't change the attitude on these issues with the people. You know, you're not. And no one could succeed in governance by having this sort of pro-American, pro-Israeli or reasonable approach to the Israelis in this environment today. So we would doom anybody that comes in with this idea. And they pander to us and say they have it. They won't last long in a leadership position with that attitude because that's not the mood of the region right now.